

REMARKS

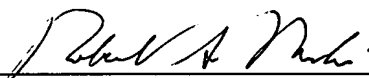
In accordance with the telephonic discussion with Examiner Kruer on September 15, 2004, the present Amendment amends independent claims 24 and 29 relating to "pellet" subject matter (while retaining dependent claims 25-28 and 30-31) and cancels all other claims in the present application without prejudice or disclaimer and with the right being reserved to pursue such claims in a continuing application. The discussion with Examiner Kruer related to evidence provided in the specification, such as in Table 1, and how pellets formed in accordance with this aspect of the invention required the presence of water in order to absorb oxygen. Thus, the claims have been amended to reflect this advantageous characteristic. It is of course to be understood that pellets of the invention do not require that they actually be subjected to the defined conditions, but rather that they have the characteristic that when they are subjected to the defined conditions, the pellets require the presence of water in order to absorb oxygen.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the claims now of record, which are believed to be patentable in all respects and, subject to a favorable updated search of the prior art, is requested to reconsider and allow the present application.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the application, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 

Robert G. Mukai
Registration No. 28,531

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: September 27, 2004